



Pending Claims

18. (Currently Amended) A method for storing at a fixed relative humidity a pre-processed food product in a food cabinet housing having a plurality of removable and enclosable food product compartments enclosed in a plurality of shelf levels comprising the steps of:

- a) heating water in a water reservoir of a steamer assembly to a first substantially fixed temperature and maintaining the water in the water reservoir at said first substantially fixed temperature;
- b) heating air passing through said food cabinet housing to a second substantially fixed temperature and maintaining the air in said food cabinet housing at said second fixed temperature so as to control and maintain a fixed relative humidity within said food cabinet housing;
- c) placing a pre-processed food product into at least one of said removable and enclosable compartments;
- d) controlling and sequencing the removal of the pre-processed food products from each removable and enclosable compartment before the expiration of a predetermined amount of time such that the pre-processed food products that have been placed into said food cabinet for a length of time closest to the predetermined amount of time are removed first, at any shelf level of the cabinet.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein said pre-processed food products are selected from the group consisting of cooked baked goods and toasted baked goods.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein said pre-processed food products are toasted hamburger buns.

21. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of maintaining the first fixed temperature of the water in the water reservoir of said steamer assembly to be within the range of between approximately 130° to 180°F.

22. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of maintaining the first fixed temperature of the water in the water reservoir of said steamer assembly at a temperature of approximately 150°F.

23. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of maintaining the second fixed temperature of the air in the food cabinet housing to be within the range of between approximately 125° to 150°F.

24. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of maintaining the second fixed temperature of the air in the food cabinet housing at a temperature of approximately 135° F.

25. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of conditioning the pre-processed food products in said food cabinet housing at a fixed relative humidity of approximately 70%.

26. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of indicating by colored light differentiation the sequencing of removal of the pre-processed food products from each compartment before the expiration of a predetermined amount of time.

27. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of placing the food product into a drawer and placing said drawer into a compartment.

28. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of promoting drainage of moisture from the pre-processed food products.

29. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of providing each of said drawers with respective carrier inserts.

30. The method of claim 29 further comprising the step of providing a plurality of rows of open slits on a supporting surface of each of said carrier inserts.

31. The method of claim 29 and further comprising the step of substantially offsetting adjacent rows of said plurality of rows of open slits from one another.

32. The method of claim 18 further comprising placing a steam baffle plate between said steamer assembly and said food cabinet housing.

33. The method of claim 29 further comprising the step of leaning each of said plurality of pre-processed food products in each of said carrier inserts by providing an angled surface along a rear surface of each carrier insert which is set at approximately 41.5° from horizontal.

34. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of conditioning said pre-processed food products at the fixed relative humidity of the food cabinet housing for up to approximately 90 minutes.

35. (previously cancelled)

36. (previously cancelled)

37. (previously cancelled)

38. (previously cancelled)

39. (previously cancelled)

40. (previously cancelled)

41. (previously cancelled)

42. (previously cancelled)

43. (previously cancelled)

44. (previously cancelled)

45. (previously cancelled)

46. (previously cancelled)

47. (Currently Amended) A method for storing a pre-processed food product in a food cabinet housing having a plurality of removable and enclosable food product compartments enclosed in a plurality of shelf levels comprising the steps of:

- b) heating water in a water reservoir of steamer assembly to a first fixed temperature and maintaining the water in the steamer assembly at said first substantially fixed temperature;
- b) heating air passing through said food cabinet housing to a second fixed temperature and maintaining the air in said food cabinet housing at a second substantially fixed temperature so as to control and maintain a fixed relative humidity within said food cabinet housing;
- c) movably guiding each of a plurality of drawers in a respective one of said plurality of removable and enclosable compartments so that

each drawer can be independently opened/closed with respect to the other drawers;

- d) independently opening each of said drawers and placing pre-processed food products in said opened drawer;
- e) closing said opened drawer into said respective compartment so as to store pre-processed food products in said respective compartment;
- f) conditioning the pre-processed food products at the fixed relative humidity of said food cabinet housing for a predetermined amount of time-so as to maintain the product appearance of the pre-processed food products; and
- g) independently opening one of said drawers and removing the conditioned pre-processed food products from the respective drawer prior to the expiration of a predetermined amount of time such that the pre-processed food products that have been conditioned for a length of time closest to the predetermined amount of time are removed first, at any shelf level of the cabinet.

48. The method of claim 47 further comprising the step of controlling the sequencing of the removal of the pre-processed food products from each compartment before the expiration of the predetermined amount of time.

49. The method of claim 48 further comprising the step of holding said pre-processed food products in a carrier insert which is removably supported in a corresponding one of said plurality of drawers.

50. The method of claim 49 and further comprising the step of promoting drainage of moisture from the pre-processed food products held in each carrier insert.

51. The method of claim 48 further comprising the step of placing a steam baffle plate between said steamer assembly and said food cabinet housing to pass steam generated in said steamer assembly into said food cabinet housing.